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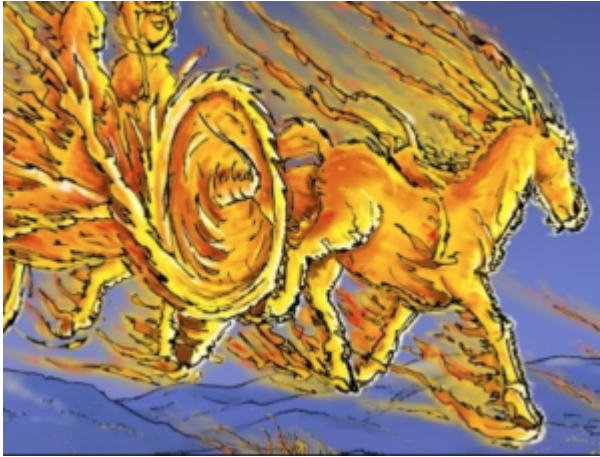
See, the LORD is Coming with Fire, and His Chariots are Like a Whirlwind

66: 15-17

See, the LORD is coming with fire, and His chariots are like a whirlwind DIG: What is God's purpose in ending this book with this final warning? How will the chariots of fire affect unbelievers? The faithful remnant? How is the rebuke for the wicked and promises to the faithful in 56:9 to 58:14, parallel to the rebuke for the wicked and promises to the faithful 65:1 to 66:17 (see the chiastic structure in [Jj](#) - My House Will Be Called a House of Prayer for All Nations)? In what sense is the LORD jealous? Is that good or bad?

REFLECT: What form of idolatry would you like to see destroyed today? Do you feel sad or happy when you read these verses? Do believers need to be concerned about the judgment of God (Rom 8:1)? The Bible teaches that with fire and with His sword God will execute judgment. How comfortable are you with the judgment of God? Can you think of an example when you said no to something specific that you knew you shouldn't be doing? What does that have to do with our sin nature? Why do you think God gave us a choice?

The fervent prayer of the believing remnant in Chapter 64 is answered by God in Chapters 65 and 66. ADONAI makes it very clear that their sins and unfaithfulness were responsible for the judgment they had endured during the Great Tribulation. But their sins had not frustrated His promises and purposes concerning Isra'el; therefore, He gives a vision of the Messianic Kingdom and her position in it.



When the LORD returns, He is coming with fire and His chariots like a whirlwind (66:15a). A whirlwind is His sweeping, irresistible wind of judgment that leaves nothing behind. His judgment and vengeance will be inflicted upon His enemies. The rabbis teach that the fire here is the fire of Gehenna in which the adversaries of God are placed. He will bring down His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire (66:15b). Fire represents ADONAI's holiness, aroused by sin. When God restores His people in Jerusalem during the Millennium, they will rejoice and prosper, but on His and Isra'el's enemies He will swoop down in judgment like a fire (Isaiah 10:17, 29:6, 30:27 and 30; 2 Thess 1:7b-9). Human rebellion will no longer be able to stand up to the terrible presence of God than a field of wheat can stand up to a tornado.

We know from Matthew 24:1-25 and Zechariah 13:1-6 that Isra'el once again will revert to idolatry during the Great Tribulation. But now all of that will be removed. For with fire and with His sword the LORD will execute judgment, literally, return (*shub*, which is the key word in the book of Jeremiah) on all people and many will be those slain by the sword (66:16). The Bible teaches us that two-thirds of the Jews will be struck down and perish during the Great Tribulation (Zechariah 13:8). Undoubtedly, many, if not most, will be killed by the antichrist in Satan's effort to eliminate Isra'el from the face of the earth; however, many will also be killed by God's holy wrath upon a sinning world. Once again, many people have a difficult time seeing the righteousness in this judgment of ADONAI. Yes, God is love (First John 4:8) and He is patient (Second Peter 3:9). But He is also a righteous God who cannot tolerate idolatry or sin. And there is a limit to His patience. He will come again to return on His enemies the choices of their rebellion (57:18, 59:18, 65:6-7, 66:6).

Isaiah leaves no doubt that those who refuse God's ways will suffer the consequences. Earlier, the prophet said that those who resist and rebel will be devoured by the sword

(1:20 also see **27:1** and **34:5-6**). While in typical Hebrew fashion he makes **ADONAI** the first cause of the destruction (**Jeremiah 25:23; Zephaniah 2:12**), we must remember that those killed during the Great Tribulation, whether Jew or Gentile, will die as a result of their *choice* of **sin** over righteousness. We all have that same choice today.

What is different for believers, is that now we have a choice *not* to **sin**. The Bible teaches that we all inherited the fatal disease of **sin** from **Adam**, for **when he sinned, sin entered the world (Romans 5:12 NLT)**. And before having the power of **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** in our lives, the psalmist Asaph would declare that he had no choice, saying: **I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before You (Psalm 73:22)**. But after being plugged in to the changing power of **the Spirit of God**, for the first time we have *a choice*. Paul would write to the church at Rome: **What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin (Romans 6:1-2a)**. It doesn't mean that we are perfect now or in the future, but when confronted with something we know is wrong, we can say, "No thanks." **Sin** carries with it its own **judgment**, and righteousness carries with it its own reward.

At the end of the Great Tribulation there will be a destruction of every form of idolatry (**57:5**). **Those who consecrate and purify themselves** by occult practices and **go into the gardens that were favorite spots for idol worship, following the one in their midst (66:17a)**. **The one in their midst** may possibly be a person or an idol. But whatever or whoever it is, the worshipers **will meet their end together suddenly (66:17c)**. Because **Jesus Christ** will set up **His Kingdom** and rule and reign from Jerusalem, all idolatry must end. **Those who** participate in the occult when they **eat the flesh of pigs and mice** (the mouse was a symbol of the occult in the ancient world) **and other abominable things (66:17b)** must go the way of Achan (**Joshua 7**). **The eating of the flesh of pigs and mice, which were forbidden to the Jews, formed the basis of the sacrificial meals for those who practiced the occult**. When people stop believing in the revealed truth of the Bible, it is not that they end up believing in nothing, but that they will believe in *anything - gardens, pigs, mice or whatever!*

But now these occult practices are devoted to destruction by **the LORD (34:2)**. **I, ADONAI your God, am a jealous God** in the sense of a husband being **jealous** over advances made toward **His** wife. But this isn't a petty jealousy, its *a passionate devotion* (see the commentary on **Exodus**, **to see link click [Dl](#) - You Shall Not Make for Yourself an Idol**). It is just and right that **He** would want an exclusive relationship with **His wife**. The Commandments point us in the right direction (see the commentary on **Exodus [Dk](#) - You Shall Have No Other Gods Before Me**).



Hell, in the end, is **ADONAI** simply allowing people to wallow in the **sin** that they have *chosen*. **God** will not violate our free will to choose or reject **Him**. **Isaiah** is quite clear about this. To be servants of **the LORD**, *or not*, is a personal decision that none of us can avoid. There are only two kinds of spiritual food; there is angel's food or devil's food, and if you aren't eating one - you're eating the other. Choose wisely because the consequences are eternal. There will be a new world, but **God** will not force us into it. The *choice* is ours.²⁵⁹